

the Son of God. At other times the veil of the flesh hid his divinity, but here he appeared in his real glory, the deity shining forth thro his humanity. Strictly speaking, this was the natural appearance of Jesus, while the miracle of his life was that the flesh could hide his divinity.

The design of the Transfiguration it will be well to note.—It may have been two-fold. 1. It was a baptism of glory fitting him for his baptism of suffering which was soon to follow, and was thus a preparation for the crucifixion. 2. It was also designed to strengthen the faith of the disciples which was soon to be sorely tried. Jesus had just announced his rejection and death, and this was a staggering blow to the disciples' Messianic hopes. The divine glory, the heavenly visitation, the witness of the Father, at the transfiguration, would reassure the apostles and strengthen their faith.

Meaning of the Text

1. *Six days.* That is six complete days. Luke says, "about an eight days after." This was according to the Jewish mode of counting the smallest parts of days as full days. So Christ was in the grave three days, that is parts of three different days. *Peter, James, John.* Seemed to have been favored three for which there was a reason. They witnessed the raising of Jarius' daughter, and afterward were nearest him in his agony. They may have been more perfectly in sympathy with him in thought and feeling and hence better able to understand him. *High mountain.* Luke says he had gone into the mountain to pray.

2. *Was transfigured.* The change in his appearance took place while he prayed. The word rendered "transfigured" is elsewhere used in a spiritual sense. See Rom. 12:2; II Cor. 3:18. Luke does not use the word. He says "the fashion of his countenance was changed." We are not told how this change was produced, the simplest explanation seems to be inherent divine glory shone thro the flesh. *Before them.* As witnesses. Several afterward referred to the scene. John 1:14; II Peter 1:16-18. *Raiment was white.* White as snow according to Mark. The scene likely took place at night making more vivid the brightness and splendor.

3, 4. *Appeared unto them.* It was a real appearance and not a mere vision. *Moses and Elias.* "Elijah." The disciples seem to have recognized the two most remarkable of old Testament characters. Moses, the representative of the law, Elijah of the prophets. *Talking with them.* The theme of conversation was the death of Christ. *Answered Peter.* As the visitants were departing. He meant to prolong the blessed scene. He gave expression to the feeling the scene awakened in him. *Three tabernacles.* Booths. He wanted to remain there.

5. *Bright cloud.* This was the symbol of the divine presence. It is found all thro the Old Testament. Ex. 33:9; I Kings 8:10. The shepherds saw it, Luke 2:9; it received Christ at his ascension. Acts 1:9, and it

will surround him when he comes again. Matt. 24:30, *Overshadowed them.* That is, our Lord and the two heavenly visitants. The cloud did not cover the disciples. Luke 9:34, R. V. *A voice.* The Father spoke witnessing to the Messiahship and Sonship of Jesus. About the same words were heard at his baptism. *Hear ye him.* The law and the prophets now gave place to Jesus. Heb. 1:1.

6, 9. *Fell—face.* Awestruck at the sound of the divine voice. *Touched them.* To arouse them from their stupor and to remove their fears for they were sore afraid. *Jesus only.* Moses and Elijah left and the glory vanished, and Jesus wore his familiar appearance. *Came down.* The next day. *Tell no man.* They did not yet fully understand the meaning and would not till after his resurrection and the descent of the Holy Spirit.

The Lesson Applied

1. *The Favored Three.*—Peter, James and John seem to have been the special friends of Jesus. He took them into closest intimacy. There must have been a reason for all this. There was something about these disciples that fitted them for the inner circle to which they were admitted. We cannot believe that our Lord was partial. It was faith, purity of heart, obedience, unselfishness. These are the things that bring us nearest to Christ. That place is still open to those who will come in the right way. Faith brings us near, unbelief separates us from God. The pure in heart shall see God. We do not have to wait till we get to heaven to be the personal friends of Jesus. You may get very close to the heart of Jesus by faith, obedience, purity of heart and the unselfish, forgiving spirit.

2. *Power of Prayer.*—From one of the evangelists we learn that Jesus was transfigured while praying. This teaches us the wonderful transforming power of prayer. Moses was alone with God forty days and when he returned from that communion with God his face shone with dazzling brightness. Communion with God in prayer transfigures our lives. Sweet hour of prayer, who can estimate the power of such an hour spent daily in secret communion with God? We grow like the things on which our thoughts are fixed. If we think on heavenly things our lives will become heavenly and pure and sweet. Hence Paul exhorts us to set our affections on things above. If we turn our thoughts to God and think on him, commune with him, our characters will grow Godlike and Christlike.

3. *The Future Life.*—Moses and Elijah had both been dead, one a thousand years, the former five hundred more, yet they lived and here they were recognized. So it is. Our friends who died in the Lord are yet living and one day we shall see and know them. This is a blessed thought. If we could but get this thought into our hearts it would make our lives grander and greater.

4. *A Good Place.*—The place was so desirable that Peter wanted to stay there. But this

could not be, for below in the valley by the wayside humanity was crying for help. So it is in all life. Let us arise and go hence.

To Make You Think

1. Into what Mount did Jesus go and why did he go? 2. Why were Peter, James and John permitted to be present on this occasion? 3. Was there a reason why these three were specially favored? 4. Was Christ partial? 5. Did he love some people more than others? 6. What change took place while Jesus prayed? 7. Was this a real change in the nature of Christ? 8. Was the Transfiguration a miracle? 9. How did the Transfiguration help the disciples in all their after life? 10. Was that experience an evidence that we shall recognize our friends in heaven? 11. Did the disciples know Moses and Elijah, and if so how did they come to recognize them? 12. Where have we a description of Jesus eternally transfigured? 13. Will believers be so transfigured? When? 14. Do Christians have almost similar experiences even in this life? (Moses' face shone from the mount, so Stephen as he sat in the council.) 15. What proposition did Peter make and why? 16. What three things were commendable in this proposition? 17. In what particulars was the proposition not right? 18. What if the proposition had been accepted? 19. Did the apostles remember the Transfiguration in after life? 20. What makes you think so? 2 Peter 1:16-18; John 1:14.

Lesson Points

1. Strong faith gets us close to Christ.
2. Christ transfigures all life.
3. Life goes on when men leave the world.
4. It is good to be in the sanctuary and enjoy the song, praise and prayer, but it is not good to remain there; sorrow and need are waiting outside for our coming.

For the Teachers' Meeting

I. Very carefully lead up to this lesson. The Transfiguration stands as the center of Jesus's earthly career. Growing hostility should be traced. Have a distinct knowledge of the leading incidents in our Savior's life which had not yet happened. Note the time—only a few months before the crucifixion; is there any significance in this? The place—Tabor or Hermon, and why?

II. What is a transfiguration? The difference between a transfiguration and a transformation?

III. Selection of Peter, James, and John; reasons.

IV. Teachings of this scene concerning Christ; 1. Transfiguration succeeds prayer; 2. His divinity declared by God; 3. The Gospel fulfillment of the law and the prophets; 4. The crown and climax of Jesus's career was his death, his humiliation his chief glory.

V. The two saints—who they were and why they were present.

VI. Teachings concerning the future state: 1. Conscious existence, Elijah and